By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

Technology Director Chris Mestl presented information to the Perkins County Board of Education during their regular meeting on April 16 regarding the purchase of 55 new laptops for teachers and staff as part of the district's laptop initiative instituted three years ago.

The cost of the laptop computers at $114,190 includes three years of AppleCare warranty on all machines and some additional power cords.

The purchase of new machines will allow for all current laptops being used by the teachers to be passed along to students.

This means each student in sixth through 12th grades will have a machine to work on, and more laptops will be provided for the mobile labs in the elementary school.

Discussion with the board involved whether Perkins County Schools should be on a three-year or four-year cycle for warranty.

According to Superintendent Tobin Buchanan, the current Apple laptop computers used by teachers and students are on a three-year warranty, which means the machines that are being passed along to students, as well as current student machines, will be a test for the district to see how long they will last.

If the laptops seem to function properly beyond the initial three-year warranty and actually last another year, a decision will be made by the board next year on whether to purchase a three-year or four-year warranty.

Buchanan said the trial is to find out if paying the additional cost for four years of warranty would be worth it, or whether the machines would need to be replaced after three years anyway.

The district will look ahead at providing more technology at the elementary school depending on the outcome of whether laptops will last four years.